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(19)



Europäisches Patentamt

European Patent Office

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(11)

EP 0 887 208 A2

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:

30.12.1998 Bulletin 1998/53

(51) Int Cl.⁶ B60C 9/26, B60C 9/22

(21) Application number: 98304990.9

(22) Date of filing: 25.06.1998

(84) Designated Contracting States:

AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE

Designated Extension States:

AL LT LV MK RO SI

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(30) Priority: 27.06.1997 JP 172287/97

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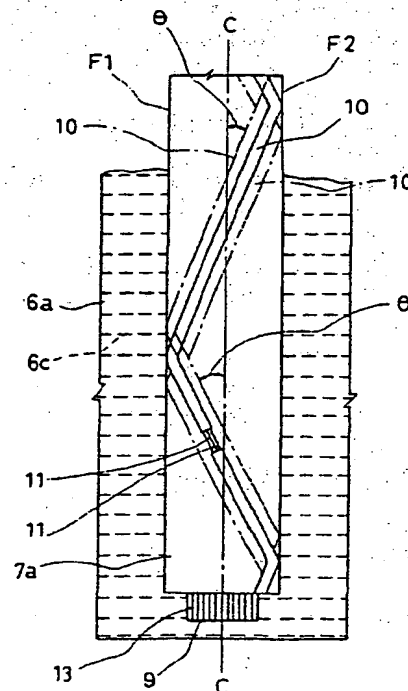
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(54) **Pneumatic tyre**

(57) A pneumatic tyre comprises a breaker (2) disposed radially outside a carcass (6) and having a cord angle (θ) of not less than 10 degrees, and a band (9) disposed between the carcass (6) and the breaker (7) and having a cord angle of less than 10 degrees, the breaker (7) having a double-layered cord structure comprising a radially outer layer and a radially inner layer between which the cord inclination (θ) is reversed, the band (9) being made of spiral windings of at least one cord (13); and the breaker (7) is preferably formed by continuously winding at least one cord laid zigzag around the radially outer side of the band (9) plural times, in each turn the tape being bent at the axial edges (F1, F2) of the breaker.

Fig.2



Description

The present invention relates to a pneumatic tyre having an improved belt structure being capable of decreasing the tyre weight without decreasing the tyre strength and the belt hoop effect.

As an approach to the environmental problems such as global warming and air pollution, it is a main theme to improve automobiles' fuel consumption. In tyres, therefore, it is very important to decrease the weight, which is especially true of pneumatic tyres for heavy duty vehicles such as trucks and buses.

Nowadays, radial tyres are widely used, and radial tyres are provided radially outside the carcass (a) with a breaker (b) as shown in Fig. 10 to reinforce the tread portion. In general, the breaker for heavy duty radial tyres is composed of four cut-edge plies (b1-b4) of rubberised parallel cords (c) to provide the necessary strength for the tread portion. If the number of the cut-edge plies is decreased, it is difficult for the tyre to pass a strength test. Here, the strength (hereinafter, plunger strength) corresponds to the so called plunger energy obtained by the method specified in Japanese Industrial Standard D4230.

On the other hand, if the inclination angle of the breaker cords to the tyre equator C is increased, the envelope effect is enhanced at the sacrifice of the hoop effect. Therefore, there are some instances where the necessary plunger strength can be barely obtained by increasing the inclination angle even if the breaker ply number is decreased. In this case, however, tyre growth, especially, a partial growth greater in the tread crown portion is inevitable because of the decreased hoop effect.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a pneumatic tyre in which the tyre weight is decreased without decreasing the plunger strength and at the same time the above-mentioned unfavourable tyre growth can be prevented.

According to one aspect of the present invention, a pneumatic tyre comprises a carcass comprising at least one ply of cords arranged radially at an angle of from 70 to 90 degrees with respect to the tyre equator, a breaker disposed radially outside the carcass in a tread portion, the breaker having a layered cord structure comprising a radially outer layer and a radially inner layer wherein with respect to the circumferential direction of the tyre the cord inclination is reversed between the radially outer layer and the radially inner layer and the cord angle is not less than 10 degrees, and a band disposed between the carcass and the breaker, the band made of spiral windings of at least one cord, the cord angle of which is less than 10 degrees with respect to the circumferential direction of the tyre.

An embodiment of the present invention will now be described in detail in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a cross sectional view of an embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a developed schematic plan view showing an arrangement of the carcass, band and breaker wherein one of zigzag windings of a tape is shown but the others are omitted;

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of the tape used to make the breaker and band;

Fig. 4 is a diagram for explaining the bends of the zigzag tape;

Fig. 5 is a graph showing variations of tyre diameter at the tyre equator as a function of the running distance;

Fig. 6 is a graph showing variations of tyre diameter at the tyre shoulder as a function of the running distance;

Fig. 7 is a graph showing variations of radius of curvature in the tread crown portion as a function of the running distance;

Fig. 8 is a graph showing relationships between the plunger strength and tyre weight;

Fig. 9 is a graph showing a relationship between the BKW/TW ratio and cornering force; and

Fig. 10 is a developed plan view showing a conventional belt arrangement for heavy duty radial tyres.

In Fig. 1, the tyre of the present invention is a heavy duty radial tyre for a 15 degree taper centre drop rim.

The tyre comprises a tread portion 2, a pair of axially spaced bead portions 4 each with a bead core 5 therein, a pair of sidewall portions 3 extending between the tread edges and the bead portions 4, a carcass 6 extending between the bead portions 4, and a tread reinforcing belt 7, 9 disposed radially outside the carcass 6 and inside a tread rubber.

The carcass 6 is composed of at least one ply 6a of cords 6c arranged radially at an angle in the range of from 70 to 90 degrees to the tyre equator C and extending between the bead portions 4 through the tread portion 2 and sidewall portions 3 and turned up around the bead core 5 in each of the bead portions 4 to be secured thereto. In this example, the carcass 6 consists of a single ply 6a turned up around the bead cores 5 from the inside to the outside of the tyre. For the carcass cords 6c, steel cords are used in this example. However, organic fibre cords, e.g. polyester, nylon, rayon, aromatic polyamide and the like can be used alone or in combination with steel cords.

The above-mentioned belt is composed of a band 9 and a breaker 7.

The band 9 is disposed radially outside the carcass 6 and is composed of spiral windings of at least one cord 13. The cord angle thereof is in the range of less than 10 degrees preferably less than 5 degrees to the tyre circumferential direction. In this example, the angle is substantially zero. The axial width BW of the band 9 is set in the range of from

0.2 to 0.8 times the tread width TW.

For the band cord 13, steel cords or high modulus organic fibre cords such as aromatic polyamide cords are preferably used. However, relatively low modulus organic fibre cords such as nylon, polyester and the like may be used.

In this example, the band 9 is formed by spirally winding a tape 14 continuously from one edge to the other edge of the band 9 so that the edges 14a of the tape 14 abut each other. The tape 14 will be described later on.

Here, the tread width TW is the maximum axial width of the ground contacting area under a standard condition in which the tyre is mounted on a standard rim and inflated to a standard load and then loaded with a standard load. The standard rim is the "standard rim" specified in JATMA, the "Measuring Rim" in ETRTO, the "Design Rim" in TRA or the like. The standard pressure is the "maximum air pressure" in JATMA, the "Inflation Pressure" in ETRTO, the maximum pressure given in the "Tyre Load Limits at Various Cold Inflation Pressures" table in TRA or the like. The standard load is the "maximum load capacity" in JATMA, the "Load Capacity" in ETRTO, the maximum value given in the above-mentioned table in TRA or the like.

The breaker 7 is disposed radially outside of the band 9 and has a double-layered cord structure comprising a radially inner layer and a radially outer layer, wherein the cord inclination of the radially inner layer is opposite to the cord inclination of the radially outer layer with respect to the tyre equator. The inclination angle θ is preferably in the range of from 10 to 35 degrees, more preferably 10 to 20 degrees. The axial width BKW of the breaker 7 is preferably set in the range of from 0.8 to 1.0 times the tread width TW.

The breaker 7 may be formed by winding strips of rubberised parallel cords one upon another.

In this embodiment, however, as shown in Figs. 2 to 4, the breaker 7 is formed by continuously winding a tape 10 zigzag around the radially outside of the band 9 plural times. As a result, the resistance to breaker edge loose is effectively increased to improve the durability. In each turn or winding, the tape 10 is bent (Fig. 4) or folded (not shown) at the edges F1 and F2 of the breaker 7. Between the edges F1 and F2, the tape extends substantially straight at the angle θ with respect to the tyre equator C. Hereinafter, the straight parts of the tape extending from one edge F1 to the other edge F2 are called oblique segments. The number of bends at both edges F1 and F2 per one turn is set in the range of from two to six. In other words, when the number of the bends is two for example, the tape is bent every 180 ($=360/2$) degrees around the axis of the tyre. When the number is six, the tape is bent every 60 ($=360/6$) degrees. As a result, it becomes possible to set the cord angle θ at a certain value in the range of from about 10 to 40 degrees.

Strictly speaking, however, the number of the bends can not be an exact integer because each of the windings must be shifted from the previous winding in one circumferential direction to form a uniform double-layered structure, wherein the radially outer layer is composed of first oblique segments, and the radially inner layer is composed of second oblique segments, the first oblique segments being inclined in the same direction and the second oblique segments being inclined in the same direction which is however reverse to that of the first oblique segments.

In each layer or ply 7a, except for the edge portions, the cord or cords are inclined at the angle θ in one direction. As mentioned above, the angle θ is preferably in the range of from 10 to 35 degrees, more preferably 10 to 20 degrees. If the angle θ is less than 10 degrees, the lateral rigidity of the belt becomes insufficient for producing a necessary cornering force. If more than 35 degrees, the hoop force to the carcass 6 becomes insufficient.

The above-mentioned tapes 10 and 14 are, as shown in Fig. 3, a tape of rubber 12 in which a single cord or parallel cords are embedded along the longitudinal direction thereof. Preferably, a tape in which 2 to 10 belt cords 11, 13 are embedded is used, but it is also possible to use a tape with a single cord therein. The tapes 10 and 14 have a substantially rectangular sectional shape, and the width W₀ thereof is preferably set in the range of from 5 to 15 mm.

In this embodiment, the band cord 13 and breaker cord 11 are materially the same, but the diameters are different. To put it more concretely, steel cords are used and the diameter of the band cord 13 is less than that of the breaker cord 11.

Between the band and breaker, the cords may be differed in respect of the material, diameter, twist structure, elongation and the like. Further, it is also possible to use the same cords.

The band 9 and breaker 7 can be manufactured by winding directly on to the radially outer surface of the carcass. In practice, however, they are manufactured separately from the carcass for example by winding the tape on the cylindrical surface of a belt building drum to improve the production efficiency as well as the dimensional accuracy.

Further, it is possible to make the band 9 and breaker 7 by winding one tape continuously from the band to the breaker, for example using a tape in which two to four steel cords are embedded.

Figs. 5 to 7 show the results of comparison tests. The test tyres were heavy duty radial tyres of size 11R22.5 including: the tyre according to the invention provided with the above-explained belt structure composed of the double-layered breaker and single-layered band; and a reference tyre provided with the conventional four-ply breaker shown in Fig. 10. In Fig. 5, the variations of the tyre diameter measured at the equator are shown as a function of the running distance. In Fig. 6, the variations of the tyre diameter measured in the shoulder portion at the breaker edge position are shown as a function of the running distance. In Fig. 7, the variations of the radius TR of curvature of the tread crown portion are shown as a function of the running distance. As shown in Figs. 5-7, the variations of the tyre according to the invention can be decreased in comparison with the reference tyre, though the belt ply number is less than that of

the reference tyre.

Fig.8 shows the tyre weight and plunger strength of each of the four-breaker-ply tyre according to the invention and the reference tyre having the conventional four-ply breaker and further a reference tyre having three breaker plies and a reference tyre having two breaker plies. In Fig.8, the plunger strength and tyre weight are indicated by an index based on the four-breaker-ply tyre being 100. Although the tyre weight is less than that of the four-breaker-ply tyre, the plunger strength of the tyre of the present invention can be greatly improved.

Fig.9 shows the cornering force as a function of the breaker width BKW when the band width BW is set at a constant value of 0.5 times the tread width TW. If the breaker width BKW is less than 0.8 times the tread width TW, the cornering force greatly decreases to deteriorate the steering stability. If the breaker width BKW is more than 1.0 times the tread width TW, the tread rubber thickness at the breaker edges decreases to deteriorate the durability.

If the band width BW is less than 0.2 times the tread width TW, the hoop force is insufficient for preventing tread deformation. If the width BW is more than 0.8 times the tread width TW, it is difficult to achieve a significant weight reduction. Further, a problem of uneven tread wear is liable to arise.

The band width BW is set in the range of from 0.2 to 0.8 times, more preferably 0.2 to 0.5 times the tread width TW.

If the band 9 is disposed radially outside the breaker 7, the plunger strength decreases, and it becomes difficult to pass the plunger strength test. Further, the cornering force decreases to deteriorate the steering stability.

If the band 9 is composed of a single winding of a strip of rubberised parallel cords, the hoop force to the carcass 6 is liable to decrease due to the splicing of the strip ends, and the durability is decreased.

Comparison Test

Heavy duty radial tyres of size 11R22.5 were made and tested for the tyre weight, tyre growth, plunger strength and durability. The tyre specifications and test results are given in Table 1.

Tyre weight test

The tyre weight was measured and indicated in Table 1 by an index based on the conventional tyre being 100, wherein the smaller the index, the lighter the tyre weight.

Tyre growth test

After running for 20,000 km on a tyre drum, the difference D_c of the tyre diameter at the tyre equator, the difference D_s of the tyre diameter at the breaker edge and the difference R_c of the radius of curvature of the tread crown portion each from that measured before running were calculated.

Wheel rim: 7.50x22.5 standard rim

Inner pressure: 850 kPa

Tyre load: 2680 kgf

Running speed: 80 km/h

Plunger strength test

The plunger strength was measured according to Japanese Industrial Standard D4230. The results are shown in Table 1 by an index based on the conventional tyre being 100, wherein the larger the index, the higher the strength.

Wheel rim: 7.50x22.5 standard rim

Inner pressure: 700 kPa

Durability test

The test tyre was run on a tyre drum and the running speed was increased every three hours at a step of 10 km/h from 80 km/h. When any visible damage was found during running, the running test was stopped, and the total running time was measured. The results are shown in Table 1 by an index based on the conventional tyre being 100, wherein the larger the index, the higher the durability.

Wheel rim: 7.50x22.5 standard rim

Inner pressure: 850 kPa

Tyre load: 4000 kgf

From the test results, it was confirmed that the tyre according to the invention was remarkably improved in strength and durability though the tyre weight was decreased, and the dimensional stability was effectively improved.

TABLE 1

Tyre	Conventional	Ex. 1	Ref. 1	Ref. 2
Carcass				
No. of ply	1			
Cord	steel cord (3x0.20+7x0.23)			
Cord angle	90 degrees to tyre equator			
Cord count	38 ends/5cm at under bead core			
Breaker				
No. of layer	4	2	2	2
Structure	Fig.10	Fig.2	cut-end ply	Fig.2
Cord angle (deg)	+67/+18/-18/-18	+18/-18	+18/-18	+18/-18
Cord	steel cord (3x0.20+6x0.35)			
Cord count	265cm			
Band				
No. of layer	-	1	-	-
Cord material	-	steel (3X0.17+7X0.20)	-	-
Cord angle	0 degree			
Cord count	40/5cm			
Test results				
Tyre weight	100	93	90	90
Dc (mm)	5	3	8	7
Ds (mm)	4	2	5	4
Rc (mm)	25	15	40	35
Strength	100	130	77	77
Durability	100	120	90	120

Claims

1. A pneumatic tyre comprising a carcass (6) comprising at least one ply (6a) of cords arranged radially at an angle of from 70 to 90 degrees with respect to the tyre equator (C), characterised by a breaker (7) disposed radially outside the carcass (6) in a tread portion, the breaker (7) having a layered cord structure comprising a radially outer layer and a radially inner layer wherein with respect to the circumferential direction of the tyre the cord inclination is reversed between the radially outer layer and the radially inner layer and the cord angle θ is not less than 10 degrees, and a band (9) disposed between the carcass (6) and the breaker (7), the band (9) comprising spiral windings of at least one cord (13), the cord angle of which is less than 10 degrees with respect to the circumferential direction of the tyre.
2. A pneumatic tyre according to claim 1, characterised in that said breaker (7) is formed by continuously winding a tape (14) zigzag around the radially outside of the band (9) plural times, the tape (14) being bent at the axial edges (F1,F2) of the breaker (7) in each turn, and the tape (14) being a tape of rubber in which a single cord (13) or plurality of parallel cords are embedded along the longitudinal direction thereof.
3. A pneumatic tyre according to claim 2, characterised in that said band and breaker are formed by winding a single continuous tape (14).
4. A pneumatic tyre according to any of claims 1-3, characterised in that the breaker (7) has a double-layered cord structure, the axial width (BKW) of the breaker is in the range of from 0.8 to 1.0 times the width of the tread (TW),

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the band (9) has a single-layered cord structure, and the axial width (BW) of the band is in the range of from 0.2 to 0.8 times the width of the tread (TW).

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Fig.1

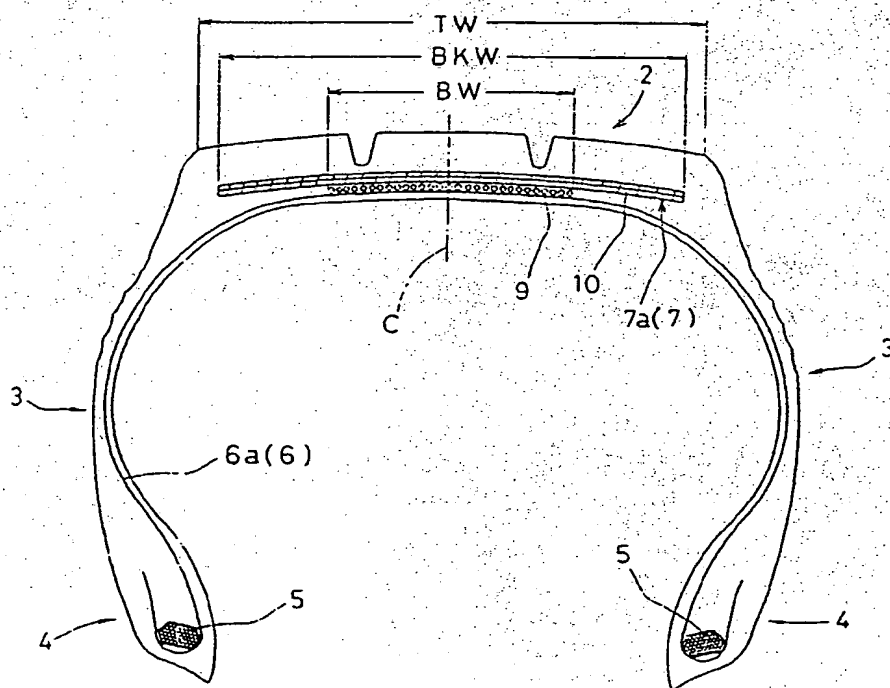


Fig.3

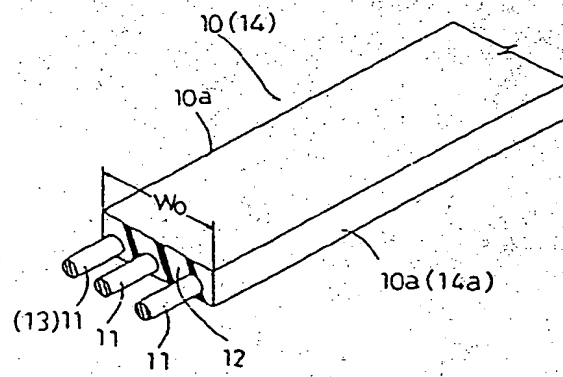


Fig.4

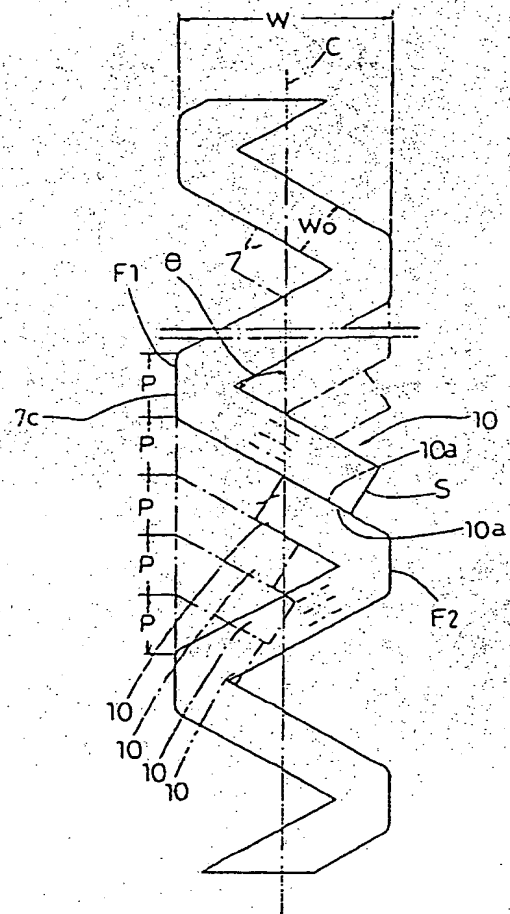


Fig.5

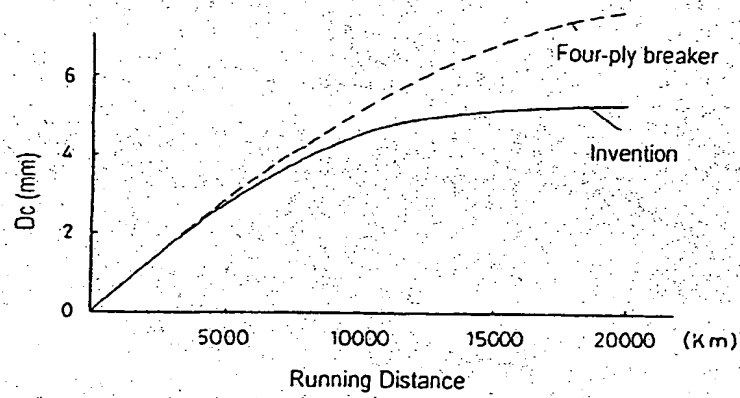


Fig.9

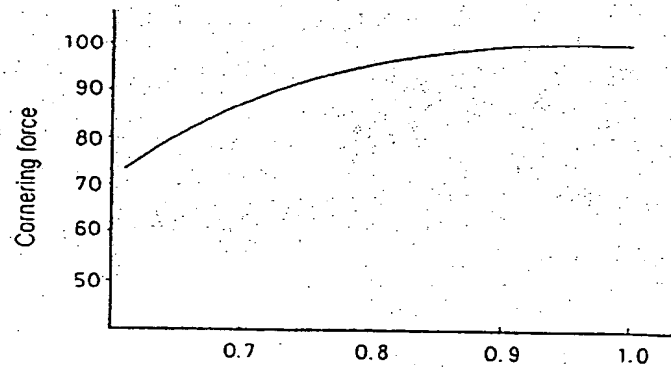


Fig.6

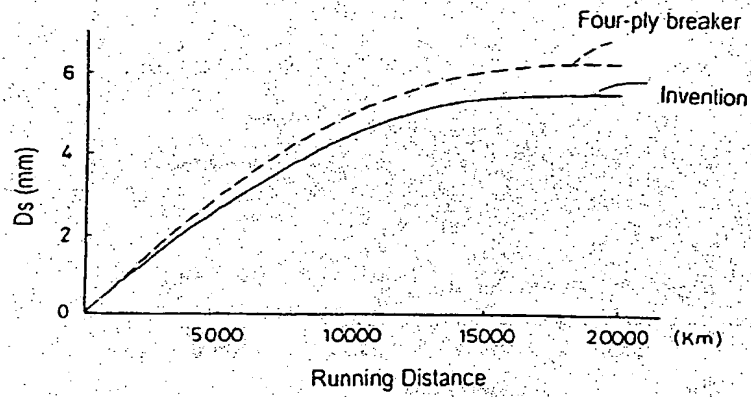


Fig.7

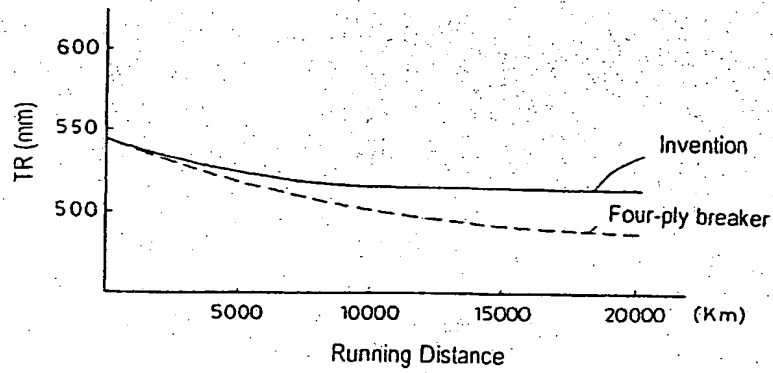


Fig.8

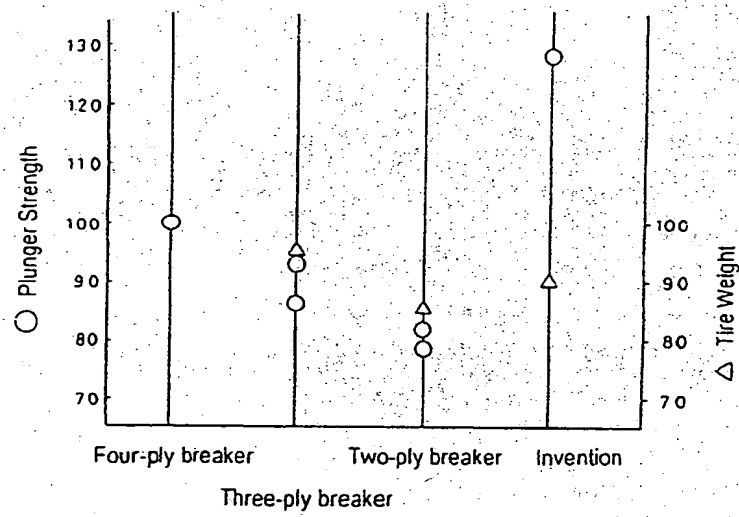
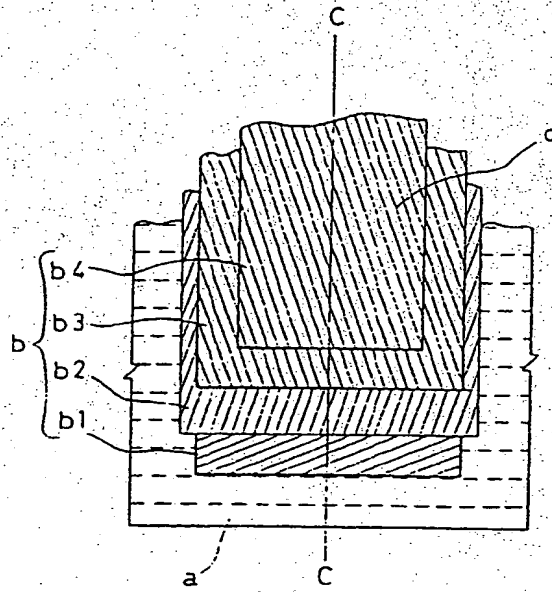


Fig.10



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(11)

EP 0 887 208 A3

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(88) Date of publication A3:
20.09.2000 Bulletin 2000/38

(51) Int Cl.7: B60C 9/26, B60C 9/22

(43) Date of publication A2:
30.12.1998 Bulletin 1998/53

(21) Application number: 98304990.9

(22) Date of filing: 25.06.1998

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE
Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

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(30) Priority 27.06.1997 JP 17228797

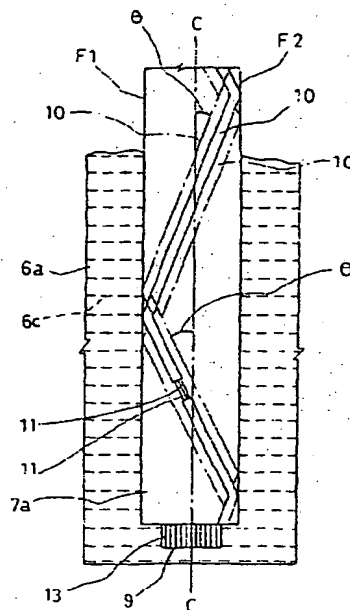
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Fig.2





European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

EP 98 30 4990

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Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82